

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 AMMAN 09161 081620Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
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S E C R E T AMMAN 9161

EXDIS
E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: PBOR, EAID, IS, JO, US, XF
SUBJECT: MAQARIN DAM - NEXT STEPS

1. WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR INSTRUCTIONS REFTEL AND GENERALLY AGREE WITH THEIR THRUST BUT BEST POSSIBLE FACE ON ISSUE AT MOMENT AND DO NOT CLOSE OFF OPTION FOR TECHNICAL TALKS. INSTRUCTIONS HOWEVER HINGE ON TWO ISSUES WHICH WE BELIEVE MUST BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT AND ON WHICH WE SEEM TO HAVE A DIFFERENCE OF UNDERSTAND.

2. FIRST CONCERNS THE FACT AS TO WHETHER WE CAN SAY WITH FULL CONFIDENCE TO THE JORDANIANS THAT "GOI CAN ACCEPT 25 MCM FIGURE FOR MAQARIN DAM (STAGE II) AND LEAVE THE DIFFERENCE UP TO 40 MCM FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION." RECOLLECTION FROM PARTICIPANTS IN THE JERUSALEM MEETING FROM HERE IS THAT ISRAELIS DID NOT RPT NOT GIVE A GREEN LIGHT TO THIS APPROACH, BUT THERE MAY HAVE BEEN SOMETHING LIKE A WINKING ANBER ONE. IF THAT IS TEL AVIV'S RECOLLECTION I WOULD FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE IF SOMEONE COULD RAPIDLY CHECK THIS POINT OUT WITH KANTOR OR VARDI IN THE CONTEXT THAT THIS IS WHAT WE WILL TELL JORDANIANS IN ORDER TO ALLOW THEM TO GO AHEAD WITH THEIR FEASIBILITY STUDY WITH HARZA. THE END RESULT WILL BE THAT WE WILL END UP FUNDING THE DAM AT THE 25 MCM FOR THE TRANGLE LEVEL AND WOULD
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EXPECT ISRAELIS NOT TO DISOWN THAT POSITION IF ASKED BY THE CONGRESS OR BY OTHERS. IN EFFECT TOO, ISRAELIS HAVE GIVEN UP PRINCIPAL LEVERAGE POINT TO ACHIEVE DIRECT TECHNICAL TALKS AND CHANGED THEIR BASIC VIEW THAT 25 MCM- 40 MCM PROBLEM CAN BE WORKED OUT EASILY IN DIRECT TECHNICAL TALKS. IT WOULD ALSO ALLOW US TO TELL JORDANIANS TECHNICAL TALKS WOULD BE ON THAT BASIS AND AS SUCH DIRECTLY CONTRARY TO PARA 2 OF INSTRUCTIONS.

WE HOPE THIS CAN BE CLARIFIED IN A POSITIVE SENSE SOON BY TEL AVIV, BUT HAVE OUR RESERVATIONS ABOUT THIS BEING THE ISRAELI POSITION.

3. SECONDLY, EVEN IF THAT IS THE ISRAELI POSITION,, IT CANNOT HELP OVERCOME THE PROBLEM OF THE ADASIYAH DIVERSION WEIR (ADW). IF ADW NOT CONTRUCTED, AMOUNT OF WATER FLOWING PAST EAST GHOR CANAL MAIN INTAKE WOULD PROBABLY NOT MEET LOW FLOW RATES DISCUSSED WITH GOI BECAUSE OF INEFFICIENCY OF DROP INLET AS COMPARED WITH ADW. DAM DESIGN FOR DROP INLET MAY THEN WELL BECOME UNECONOMICAL IN SPITE OF ABDULLAH'S STATEMENT TO ME YESTERDAY THAT ONE OPTION WOULD BE TO GO FOR THE MAXIMUM DAM HEIGHT.

4. ALL OF THIS SUGGEST POSSIBILITY OF SOME COMBINATION OF ISRAELI AGREEMENT OF 25 MCM FOR STAGE II PLUS FULL DAM HEIGHT NOW. IT WOULD BE MORE EXPENSIVE AND NOT MOST EFFICIENT SET UP.

5. IN VIEW OF THIS UNCERTAINTY, IF I MEET WITH HASAN, AND I AM NOT NOW PRESSING THIS COURSE, I SUGGEST THAT I USE ALL OF THE TALKING POINTS IN PARA 5, EXCEPT C AND I. PLEASE ADVISE.. PICKERING

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NNN

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